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Cyanogen Ready to take on Google's Android

The mobile OS-maker [Cyanogen](#) has just raised USD 80 million in its Series C funding round with backing from Twitter, Rupert Murdoch and Qualcomm, making its goal of taking Android from Google all the more possible.

The people behind Cyanogen have consistently expressed their vision to make Android a more "open" ecosystem and OS. "We're committed to creating an open computing platform that fundamentally empowers the entire mobile ecosystem from developers to hardware makers, and most importantly, consumers around the world. We're excited to have the backing of an amazingly diverse group of strategic investors who are supporting us in building a truly open Android," said Kirt McMaster, Cyanogen's CEO.

Other notable investors in the most recent round include Telefonica, Access Industries, Smartfren Telecom, Vivi Nevo and Index Ventures. In Cyanogen's previous funding rounds, they got USD 30 million from Tencent, Redpoint Ventures, Benchmark and Andreessen Horowitz. This particular round which left the startup with a total of USD 110 million was led by India's Azim Premji PremjiInvest, as reported by [Hass and Associates Accounting](#).

Horowitz's partner, Peter Levine, who invested in the second round of funding said, "App and chip vendors are very worried about Google controlling the entire experience." He also admitted that at first he did not think "a startup could come in and create a new OS".

A number of other tech giants have already tried to crack a shot at the mobile OS market such as Samsung, Microsoft, Nokia, Blackberry, Intel, Palm and Mozilla. McMaster admitted he's well

aware of the big risk and that's precisely why he thinks using Android is the only way to effectively take on Google. By making available to the public the code of Cyanogen, he's expecting to gain support from app developers who want to have another option aside from the limited ones currently provided by Google and Apple. For instance, a payment solutions provider could create a highly customized payment system that can work better than Apple Pay or Google Wallet.

Sandesh Patnam of Premji Invest said, "We invested in Cyanogen because we're big proponents of what they're doing in opening up Android and supporting global and local ecosystem players. Cyanogen is well-positioned to become the third leading mobile OS, and we're excited to back them in growing their business on a global scale."

Formed 6 years ago as CyanogenMod Project, it started with 40-year old programmer Steve Kondik tinkering with Android code to maximize its performance. Soon enough, online forums have started to pick up on his customizable version which led to other programmers joining him. Hass and Associates Accounting's report says that as early as 2011, a million mobile phones have Cyanogen installed in it.

To date, around 50 million handsets are running Cyanogen, most of those underwent flashing and rebooting. Considering that one has to take time and effort in erasing the current OS of the phone before installing Cyanogen, it's not a stretch to say that there is indeed a demand for a highly-customizable OS.